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ABSTRACT

This publication discusses the Comprehensive Educational Planning and Evaluation Project, a one-year effort by the Columbus (Ohio) Public Schools to develop an effective model for involving parents, students, community members, and school personnel in planning and evaluation of the school district's activities. This effort involved conducting a needs assessment to determine the information needs of parents and students, developing an effective information system for the school district, and developing and conducting an inservice program for personnel in the district's Department of Evaluation, Research, and Planning. In addition to describing each of these activities, this report also provides information regarding major project findings and the various products developed by the project. (Author/JG)

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

PROVIDING PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

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Comprehensive Educational Planning
And Evaluation Project

An ESEA Title V, C Project

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

June, 1975

Columbus Public Schools
Columbus, Ohio

EA 008 005

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: PROVIDING PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

Comprehensive Educational Planning and Evaluation Project

Project Staff: Richard A. Amorose, Project Administrator
Keith D. Barnes
Miriam G. Brierley
Don Pierce
Linda B. Sweazy

Project Conducted By: Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning
Damon F. Asbury, Director

Division of Special Services
Joseph L. Davis, Assistant Superintendent

Columbus Public Schools
Columbus, Ohio
John Ellis, Superintendent

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The project staff takes this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the parents, students, community participants, and school personnel who made up the project's Community-School Participation Forum. The participants spent many hours and considerable energy in assessing the communication needs of the school district. The names of the participants appear in the Appendix.

Special appreciation is extended to Dr. Joseph L. Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Special Services, for his guidance in implementing the Community-School Participation Forum and his review of major project reports. Appreciation is also extended to the following Columbus school personnel who made presentations to the Forum: Dr. Damon F. Asbury, Director, Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning; Eliza Busenburg, Supervisor, Department of Health Services; Lawrence F. Fields, Supervisor, Department of Special Program Development; John Hackett, Visiting Teacher, Department of Pupil Personnel; Dr. M. Court Mussman, Chairman, Psychological Services; Fred R. Ricketts, Director, Department of Practical Education; and Margaret Wehner, Supervisor, Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning. Dr. Julia Butler of the Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning staff was especially helpful to the project staff by giving leadership to one of the Forum's major study groups.

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Two members of the Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning played unique roles in the project. Dr. Calvin M. Smith, Acting Director, assisted the project by critiquing this document, and by providing valuable help in the area of project management. A very special thanks goes to Gary Thompson, Professional Assistant, for his consultation and technical assistance in designing the educational information system developed by the project.

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The project staff is very much aware of the contribution made by the entire clerical staff of the Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning. Of particular assistance were: Karen Simcox who, with great patience, typed numerous project documents; and Margaret F. Robinson who assisted in maintaining fiscal and personnel records.

To all these talented people, we extend our deepest and most sincere thanks.

The Project Staff

Richard A. Amorose, Project Administrator

Dr. Keith D. Barnes
Miriam G. Brierley
Don Pierce
Linda B. Sweazy

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INTRODUCTION

The world grows more complex each day. New challenges arise. New opportunities emerge. Problems grow in number, kind, and intensity and new knowledge is created at an accelerating rate.

These developments have led to exciting breakthroughs and discoveries but they have created new problems and concerns for students, parents, and educators. There was a time when students and parents made their selections from rather broad educational programs. But today's educational marketplace offers an increasingly complex and specialized variety of choices.

Because of this complexity, it is critically important for students and parents to have access to accurate educational information on a timely basis. With a thorough understanding of the programs and services available, students and parents have a better chance of making appropriate choices.

As students and parents approach educational decisions, they face many questions, such as:

1. Where can a student having problems in reading turn for help?
2. Is it wise to take algebra in the ninth grade instead of general math?
3. What vocational programs are available for eleventh graders?
4. What programs and services are available for a handicapped child?

To assess the educational program information needs of parents and students, the Columbus Public Schools launched a one-year project entitled "The Comprehensive Educational Planning and Evaluation Project." Funds for the project were provided by the Ohio Department of Education through Title V, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Specific purposes of the project included:

1. Developing an effective model for involving parents, students, community members and school personnel in the planning and evaluation of the school district. The planning and evaluation activity selected for the Title V, C project was educational needs assessment.
2. Conducting a needs assessment to determine the information needed by parents and students to enable them to make informed decisions regarding the programs, services, and courses available in the school district. The needs assessment involved: (a) identifying critical educational decisions facing parents and students; (b) assessing informational needs associated with the decision points; and (c) identifying better methods for providing needed information.
3. Developing an information system that could provide current information regarding the programs, services, and courses available in the school district.

4. Developing and providing an in-service program for staff members of the Columbus Public Schools' Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning. Topics of the in-service program included: (a) educational needs assessment; (b) school-community relations concepts; (c) human relations and group process; and (d) cooperative planning and democratic decision-making. The purpose of the in-service program was to provide participants with the skills needed to facilitate the work of a group(s) conducting a needs assessment, or the functioning of other types of task-oriented groups.

The Final Project Report provides information regarding major project findings and the products developed by the project. When applicable, summary evaluation information is included. The report begins with an overview of educational needs assessment.

Persons wishing more information regarding the project can contact:

Richard A. Amorose
Project Administrator
Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning
52 South Starling Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 225-2896

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT: AN OVERVIEW

What is Educational Needs Assessment?

A review of current literature in educational needs assessment led to the formulation of the following definition. Educational needs assessment is a major phase in an ongoing planning process in which the discrepancies between "what is" and "what should be" in the areas of student knowledge and behavior are identified and ranked according to the importance placed upon the different discrepancies by various groups.

Major aspects of educational needs assessment can be identified and discussed by analyzing the preceding definition.

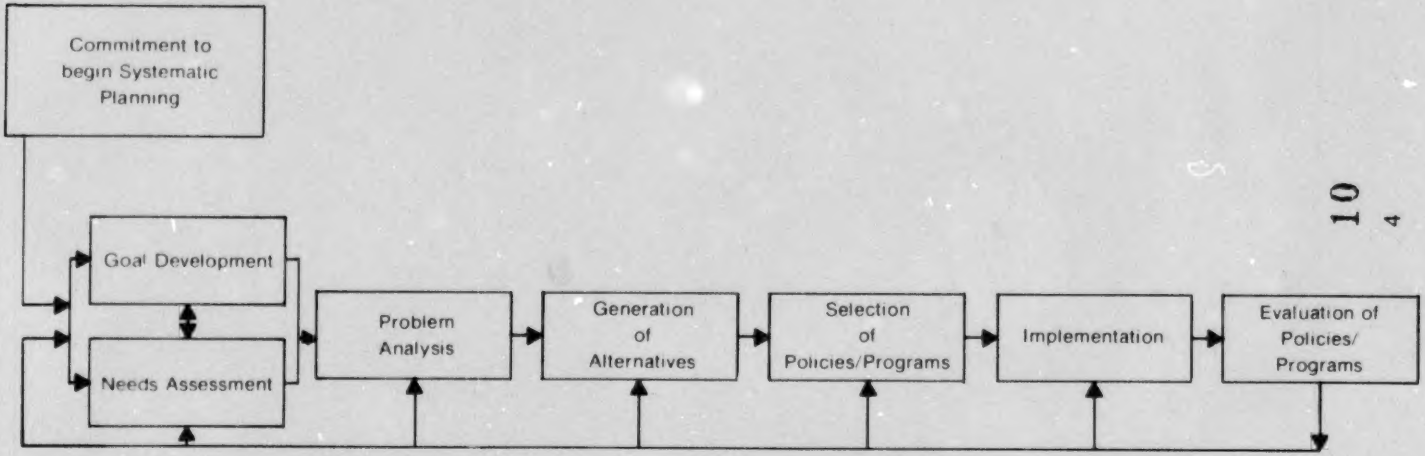
First, needs assessment is one step in an overall planning process. It is not an end in itself. The generic planning model presented in Figure 1 depicts the position of needs assessment in the planning process. This model was developed by the Bureau of Planning, New Jersey Department of Education. While in New Jersey's generic model "goal development" and, "needs assessment" are interdependent activities, in the Florida state planning model[2] shown in Figure 2, goals are developed as an initial and independent step prior to deriving need statements.

In reviewing four other comprehensive planning models it was found that in three models (Dallas[3], Fresno,[4] and Worldwide[5]) needs were assessed prior to setting goals. Only in the Phi Delta Kappa model[6] were goal statements used as a basis for assessing needs.

The distinction of whether goals or needs are identified first may be more apparent than real in the Dallas, Fresno, and Worldwide models, since defining goals and determining needs are part of a cyclical planning process.

FIGURE I

GENERIC PLANNING MODEL

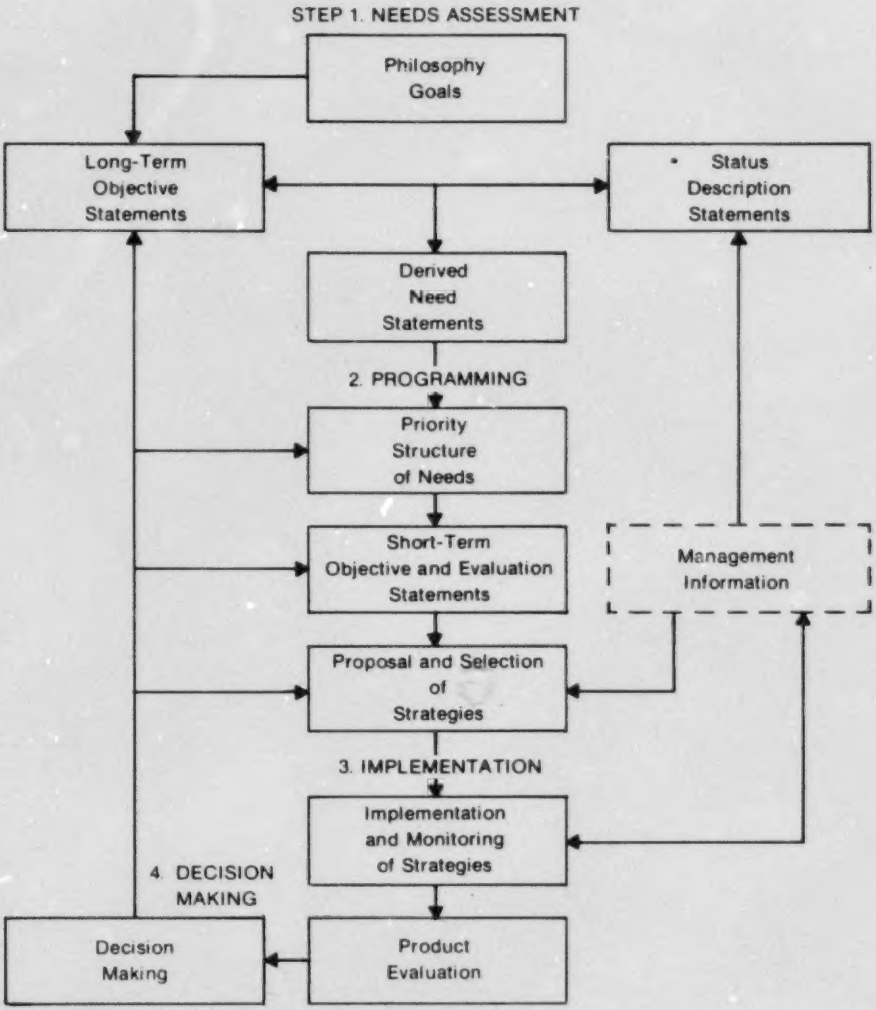


Source: *Needs Assessment in Education: A Planning Handbook for Districts*. New Jersey Department of Education, Trenton, New Jersey, 1973.

FIGURE 2

FLORIDA STATE MODEL

PLANNING CONTEXT

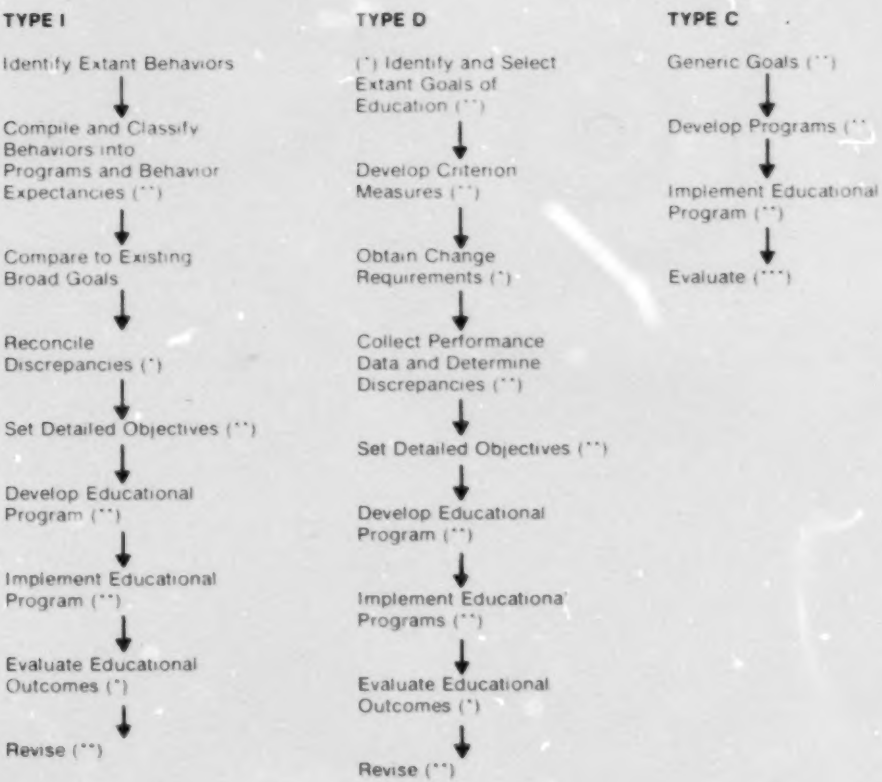


Source: *Planning for Change.*
Florida Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida.

Kaufman and Harsh describe three types of generic strategies for assessing needs and identifying goals. As presented by the authors these appear to be planning models. Figure 3 depicts the three types of strategies.

FIGURE 3

GENERIC STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSING EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND IDENTIFYING GOALS


TYPE I
Identify Extant Behaviors
Compile and Classify Behaviors into Programs and Behavior Expectancies (**)
Compare to Existing Broad Goals
Reconcile Discrepancies (*)
Set Detailed Objectives (**)
Develop Educational Program (**)
Implement Educational Program (**)
Evaluate Educational Outcomes (*)
Revise (**)
TYPE D
(*) Identify and Select Extant Goals of Education (**)
Develop Criterion Measures (**)
Obtain Change Requirements (*)
Collect Performance Data and Determine Discrepancies (**)
Set Detailed Objectives (**)
Develop Educational Program (**)
Implement Educational Programs (**)
Evaluate Educational Outcomes (*)
Revise (**)
TYPE C
Generic Goals (**)
Develop Programs (**)
Implement Educational Program (**)
Evaluate (***)

(* Accomplished by educators and representatives of sub-community members served by the agency
(**) Accomplished primarily by educators
(***) Primarily accomplished unsystematically

Source: Roger A. Kaufman and J. Richard Harsh, "Determining Educational Needs: An Overview," California State Department of Education, Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, PLEDGE Conference, October, 1969.

The starting point in the inductive model (Type I) is the collection of data on existing student behavior. After building expectancies from the data, the expectancies are compared with existing goals. The first step in the deductive model (Type D) is the identification and selection of educational goals. The next three steps involve the determination of the status of learners in relationship to the selected goals.

Kaufman and Harsh[8] state that the classical model (Type C) is the most often used by educational agencies. While it is the most often used, it is the weakest of the three models mainly because it is unsystematic and does not generate the data needed to develop and refine educational programs. The authors point out that there is no clear choice between the Type I and Type D models, however, the former may be somewhat slower and more complex to implement.

The second part of the definition is that needs assessment involves the identification of discrepancies between "what is" and "what should be" in the area of student knowledge and behavior. Kaufman[9] points out that needs assessment is a discrepancy analysis that identifies two polar positions. The identification of these polar positions permits the specification of the measurable discrepancy between these two poles.

There is general agreement in the literature that the discrepancy analysis should focus on student learning needs. Student learning needs include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor needs. Needs assessment methodology may also be used to determine institutional needs. The problem with identifying institutional needs is that these needs may only partially relate to the purpose of the school — the education of the student. From the standpoint of the learner, the meeting of a particular institutional need may be only one of several alternative strategies to meeting a student learning need.

The last part of the definition states that the discrepancies between "what is" and "what should be" are identified and ranked according to the importance placed upon the different discrepancies by various groups.

There are several important aspects of this part of the definition. These will be highlighted by reviewing the needs assessment process described in Ohio's *Needs Assessment Guidelines*.[10] The guidelines contain an eight step deductive model. These steps are summarized below.

1. Establish a needs assessment committee made up of representative members from the school and community.
2. Prepare statements of educational goals and sub-goals for the district.
3. Conduct a survey on a representative sample from the school and community to determine preceived educational needs. The survey provides data on both the *level of importance* of goals and sub-goals, and the *perceived degree* to which the goals and sub-goals are being achieved by the school district.
4. Assign priorities to perceived educational needs. This is done by the needs assessment committee using the survey data.

5. Set the desired levels of student achievement on top priority perceived needs. This activity is done primarily by the needs assessment committee. The desired levels may be set in terms of student performance on norm referenced tests, criterion referenced tests, and other types of measures.
6. Ascertain actual status of student achievement on the top priority perceived needs through the use of appropriate measures (e.g., tests, rating scales, observations).
7. Compare the actual status of students with the desired level of student achievement set in Step 5.
8. Assign priorities to the actual educational needs. This is done by the needs assessment committee primarily through a study of the discrepancy between desired and actual achievement.

As the eight steps indicate, the needs assessment process involves representatives from various groups working together in what has been termed the "educational partnership." Included in this partnership should be students, parents, community members, and educators. In Steps 2-5 in the guidelines the educational partnership defines the goals of education for the school district. These goals reflect societal expectations of the educational system.

While "hard data" are used in the needs assessment process, heavy emphasis is placed on human values and valuing. This is particularly true in steps where the needs assessment committee must generate goals and subgoals, assign priorities to perceived and actual needs, and in Step 3 where a representative sample is surveyed to determine preceived educational needs. Some skills that can facilitate the functioning of the needs assessment committee are outlined in the next section of this monograph.

Why Educational Needs Assessment?

Several factors are playing major roles in both emphasizing the importance of needs assessment and in developing the methodology for refining the needs assessment process.

One of these factors is the changing public attitude toward education. Parents, students and the community are demanding a greater voice in setting educational priorities, implementing programs, and reviewing the results of these programs. This phenomenon is discussed by many writers in terms of the larger issue of educational accountability.

Another facet of this issue is the expenditure of funds for educational purposes. The public has seen an increase in the budgets of educational agencies with millions of federal dollars being spent annually for the development of innovative programs and compensatory education. The public is asking how and with what result are these funds being spent. These same questions are being asked by agencies and foundations who make funds

available for educational purposes. Applicants for grant awards are increasingly being asked to demonstrate convincingly that there is a need for their projects, and later to produce "hard evidence" that projects met the need described in grant applications.

Kaufman and Harsh[11] point out that the needs assessment process can protect educators from unwarranted criticism, because needs assessment requires that school district goals be set in educational partnership with the client system. Kaufman and Harsh hold that clearly set goals and goal achievement data protect educators in two ways. Educators can demonstrate progress toward agreed upon goals, and they cannot be held accountable for goals that are outside the goal structure of the school district.

A second major factor influencing the development of needs assessment is the advancement of knowledge in the fields of planning, management and budgeting. The application of this new knowledge to the educational setting requires that the educational manager specify desired ends and carefully allocate resources to achieve these ends.

The "systems approach" is one advancement that has had a major impact on needs assessment. Kaufman describes the "systems approach" as, "A process by which needs are identified, problems are selected, requirements for problem solutions are identified, solutions are selected from alternatives, methods and means are attained and implemented, results are evaluated, and required revisions to all or part of the system are made so that the needs are eliminated."[12] Kaufman points out that systems planning requires that careful determination of *what* should be accomplished must precede any discussion of *how* any task will be completed. Needs assessment is the process that answers the "what" questions.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT: IN-SERVICE

One of the objectives of the Columbus Title V, C project was to develop an in-service module that could be used to train school personnel who would serve as facilitators for a group(s) involved in needs assessment activities. The in-service training would also be useful for persons working with other types of task-oriented groups. The in-service module would stress group process and human relations skills.

The in-service module was developed and used in a series of 14 training sessions with staff members of the Columbus Public Schools' Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning. Following the completion of the in-service, the module underwent further development based on evaluation data collected from in-service participants.

The following is an outline of the major contents of the 86 page module.

Facilitator Training Module
for the
Human Processes of Needs Assessment

I. Introduction and Climate Setting
   A. Brief Welcome and Overview of the Training Module
      1. Review of the basic needs assessment procedure including emphasis on the educational partnership and human valuing process inherent in needs assessment
      2. Rational concerning the necessity of acquiring information and skill to facilitate the work of the people who do needs assessment
      3. A comment concerning planning and evaluation as part of the in-service process
   B. Becoming Acquainted
      1. Purposes
         a) To encourage individual participation while allowing participants to become acquainted in a relatively non-threatening way
         b) To give participants practice with a type of task they could use at the initial meeting they would conduct
      2. Task: "Name Tag"
         a) Gives participants increased awareness of others as individuals and offers practice in establishing eye contact
         3. Six other get acquainted activities

II. The Needs Assessment Process
   A. An extensive handout describing the steps to follow in conducting a needs assessment, and a list of resources for assisting in completing these steps
   B. A questionnaire to help train the participant to distinguish between concerns, solutions, and educational needs

III. Interpersonal Communication Skills
  A. Brief presentation of various communication skills
    1. Skills presented
      a) Paraphrasing
      b) Perception Checking
      c) Behavior Description
      d) Description of Feelings
    2. Examples which help to illustrate the statement that learning to listen means not only for message content but for message intent
  B. Skill practice and reinforcement
    1. Use of reinforcement materials adopted from materials available from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
    2. Practice with two tasks involving participants in such a way that they must paraphrase others' comments before offering their own contribution
    3. Practice involving the observation of group interaction using a prepared instrument

IV. Communication in Patterns
  A. Purposes
    1. To serve as a transition from interpersonal communication skills previously presented to further experience and instruction in the area of group dynamics
    2. To use participatory demonstration to increase awareness of various directions and networks of communication within groups
    3. To help group facilitators diagnose the various working relationships within their groups and help them assist the group develop more effective ways of communicating.
  B. Tasks: "One-Way and Two-Way Communication" and "Organization Structures: Communication Patterns"
  C. Discussion
    1. Participants generalize their learning from these tasks to the responsibility they will have as needs assessment group facilitators
    2. Participants practice the skills of paraphrasing, perception checking, behavior description and description of feelings as they interact during the discussion.

V. Group Problem Solving and Decision Making
  A. Brief presentation concerning cooperation, problem solving and the process of consensus
    1. Concensus means the following
      a) Everyone can paraphrase the issue to show it is understood.
      b) Everyone has a chance to describe feelings about the issue.
      c) Those who continue to disagree or have doubts will say publicly that they are willing to give the decision an experimental try for a prescribed period of time.

2. Participants will be presented with seven basic steps in problem solving.
   a) Identifying the problem
   b) Analyzing the problem
   c) Generating multiple solutions
   d) Designing plans for action
   e) Forecasting consequences of intended actions
   f) Taking actions
   g) Evaluating the actions

B. Tasks
   1. "The Desert Problem"
   2. "Intergroup Model-Building: The Lego Man"

C. Purpose
   1. To examine (in the context of a competitive teamwork situation) leadership style, developing alternatives, dominance and submission within teams, and distribution of work and resources
   2. To offer a framework of comparison between individual and group problem solving
   3. To allow participants an opportunity for self-analysis in group functioning before becoming a needs assessment facilitator
   4. To help participants experience planning as part of the task completion process

D. Discussion
   1. How did the above tasks apply or not apply to the problem solving sequence as presented during this section's overview?
   2. A handout titled "What To Look For In Groups" will be used to structure the discussion. The following factors are covered in the handout.
      a) Participation
      b) Influence
      c) Styles of Influence
      d) Decision making procedures
      e) Task functions
      f) Maintenance functions
      g) Group atmosphere
      h) Membership
      i) Feelings
      j) Norms

VI. Non-verbal communication

A. An introduction to non-verbal communication especially focusing on using perception checking to avoid mis-communication

B. Purposes
   1. To increase participants understanding and utilization of the effective problem solving process through the use of a non-verbal task

2. To provide an opportunity for participants to become more aware of their own non-verbal communication, and to use non-verbal mannerisms in a way that conveys their desired intent

C. Tasks
   1. "Broken Squares"
      a) A non-verbal problem solving task
      b) Discussion offers time for practice with perception checking
   2. Utilizing the topic: "Who and How to Select a Needs Assessment Committee for a School District" each small group is to develop a written plan.
      a) Reinforces problem solving skills
      b) Gives practice in observing non-verbal behavior and interpreting the intended meaning
      c) Provides learning experience in task and maintenance functions within the group

VII. Convener Skills
   A. An introduction focusing on this section as a continuation of all that has proceeded. Specific skills needed to facilitate a meeting are integrated with communication skills already learned. Advantages for having group meetings and guides to aid in diagnosis of meeting difficulties are presented.
   B. Task: Mini-meetings with participants having the opportunity to act as group facilitators
      1. Participants are given the opportunity to practice skills acquired throughout the module.
      2. While group members are focusing on specific topics as a facilitator, the other members are assigned a role which can hinder a meeting.
   C. Discussion
      After feedback session, a guide to the role of a convener and some procedures to use such as taking a survey, subgrouping and fishbowl are presented.

VIII. Evaluation
   A. Various samples of evaluation are included
      1. Participants may want to use all or parts of these evaluations as part of their meetings as facilitators of group process
      2. These evaluations may be used at the conclusion of various sessions throughout the module or at the conclusion of the module

XI. References
   A. Sources of all materials presented in the in-service module
   B. Needs assessment bibliography
   C. List of resource materials

Persons wishing a copy of the in-service module can write to the address given in the Introduction of this report.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION MODEL

The community wants to become more involved in the education of its children. This statement has been a truism in the operation of America's public schools over the years, but was never more true than today.

Comprehensive plans for broadening community participation in the activities of the schools have been implemented in many major school systems across the nation. Decentralized boards of education, principal advisory councils, regional and district parent coordinating committees, and other such groups have been established in order to provide systematic and continuous community input into the planning, implementation and evaluation of school programs.

One of the objectives of the Columbus Title V, C project was to develop a model for involving parents, students, community members and school personnel in a major activity of the district's Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning. In developing the Community Participation Model, an attempt was made to develop a flexible model that could be easily modified for use in a variety of planning and evaluation activities. The activity selected for the 1974-75 project year was educational needs assessment in the area of school-community communication. Particular attention was given to the educational information needed by parents and students to enable them to take full advantage of the programs, services, and courses offered by the school district.

The development of the project's Community Participation Model was based on the following assumptions.

General Assumptions

1. Appropriately structured student-parent-community involvement can have a significant, positive effect on specific planning and evaluation activities of the school district.
2. School district personnel can effectively communicate to participating groups the philosophy, goals, objectives, and activities of the programs and services of the school district.
3. Members of participating groups can effectively communicate their specific program concerns to school district personnel.
4. A climate can be developed that fosters open interaction between participants and school district personnel.
5. The school district will allocate, on a continuing basis, the resources required to maintain effective community involvement in planning and evaluation activities.

Specific Assumptions

1. A need exists to improve present methods of communicating educational information to students, parents, and the community.
2. Present methods of communicating programs and services can be improved significantly once informational needs are identified.
3. With an orientation program and technical assistance, students, parents, and community participants can identify critical educational decision points and can accurately assess the educational informational needs relating to these decisions.
4. Once these needs are identified, persons participating in the project can develop and implement a plan to improve present methods of communicating educational information to students, parents, and the community.

The project's Community Participation Model contains flexible structures and processes that can be used to involve students, parents, community participants, and school district personnel in a wide range of possible planning and evaluation activities. The following considerations guided the development of the Model.

1. Members of participation groups should be representative of the students, parents, community, and school personnel who are directly affected by or involved in the program or service that is to be planned and evaluated.
2. Persons in the community have expertise and skills that can assist in effective planning and evaluation. It is important to effectively utilize this resource. This can best be done by organizing a resource group made up of persons who have skills specific to the planning and evaluation area under consideration.
3. A structure should be established within the sub-systems that are going to be actively involved in the planning and evaluation activities. For example, if planning information is going to be collected in a school, a person or group from that school should participate in the planning and evaluation effort. The structure at the school or department level is needed to perform both a task completion and a communication function.
4. The Community Participation Model should be as economical as possible to implement and maintain. Particular attention should be given to the expenditure of participants' time. The Model should contain an advisory group that can be easily convened. The organization of participation groups should flow easily from the nature of the planning and evaluation activities to be undertaken.

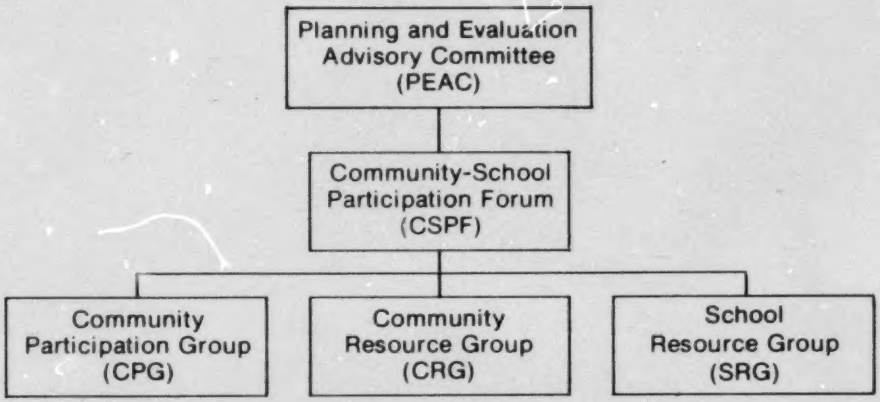
The Community Participation Model is described below. Information regarding the function and selection of members is given for each participating group. The Model contains two major structures: (1) Planning and Evaluation Advisory Committee (PEAC); and (2) Community-School Participation Forum (CSPF). The CSPF is composed of three groups.

1. Community Participation Group (CPG) — participants who are representative of persons directly affected by the planning and evaluation activities under consideration (e.g., parents, senior high students, persons from the community).
2. Community Resource Group (CRG) — participants from the community who have expertise and skills specific to the planning and evaluation activities under consideration.
3. School Resource Group (SRG) — participants from the central administrative staff and building personnel who can provide task completion and communication assistance.

An organizational chart is presented in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION MODEL
ORGANIZATION CHART


Planning and Evaluation Advisory Committee (PEAC)
Community-School Participation Forum (CSPF)
Community Participation Group (CPG)
Community Resource Group (CRG)
School Resource Group (SRG)

The Planning and Evaluation Advisory Committee (PEAC)

Functions

1. To identify the planning and evaluation areas in which to involve students, parents, community, and school district personnel.
2. To review on a periodic basis, the progress of the planning and evaluation activities identified in Function 1.
3. To provide on a continuing basis, suggestions regarding the ongoing community participation.

Membership

1. The director of the department responsible for planning and evaluation will serve as the PEAC chairperson.
2. The director of the department responsible for federally funded programs (if such a position exists).

3. A director or supervisor in the area of curriculum and instruction selected by the superintendent or assistant superintendent.
4. Two professional staff members (e.g., teachers, counselors, psychologists) selected by the professional teachers organization.
5. One secondary and one elementary principal selected by the PEAC chairperson based on their expressed interest in serving on the PEAC.
6. Two parents selected by the district's parent-teachers association. Preferably, one person would be a parent of an elementary student, and the other the parent of a secondary student.
7. Two senior high students selected by their peers (e.g., student body president).
8. Four community representatives selected by the PEAC chairperson from a list of persons wishing to serve on the committee. *The persons selected should be representative of the district as a whole.*

The Community Participation Group (CPG) of the Community-School Participation Forum

Functions

1. To assist in the planning and evaluation areas identified by the PEAC. Specified activities could include: (a) preparation of written plans; (b) instrument development; (c) data collection; and (d) data reporting.
2. To disseminate in individual school community the purposes, goals, and activities of the planning and evaluation activities.

Membership

1. A sample of parents will be selected from at least some of the schools where the planning and evaluation activities are being carried out. Parents may be selected from existing parent leadership groups. The selection process may vary depending on the type of planning and evaluation area in question. The PEAC and the building principal will play the major role in the selection process.
2. Membership would include other community persons with particular interest in the planning and evaluation area identified by the PEAC. Mass media would be used to recruit community participants.

The Community Resource Group (CRG) of the Community-School Participation Forum

Functions

1. To assist in the planning and evaluation areas identified by the PEAC. Specific activities could include: (a) reviewing present methods; (b) developing alternative methods; and (c) providing support for implementation of new practices.
2. To disseminate the purposes, goals, and activities of the focus of the planning and evaluation activities.

Membership

1. The CRG will be made up of a sample of persons from the community who have demonstrated skills in the planning and evaluation area in question. The PEAC will be responsible for the selection of CRG members.

The School Resource Group (SRG) of the Community-School Participation Forum

Functions

1. To assist in the planning and evaluation area identified by the PEAC. Specific activities could include: (a) reviewing specific written plans to determine the feasibility in a department or building; (b) collecting department or building data and information (e.g., staff, program, pupil); and (c) reporting data and information back to department or building personnel.
2. To disseminate to department or building personnel the purposes, goals, and activities of the focus of the planning and evaluation activities.

Membership

1. A representative sample of schools involved in the planning and evaluation area will be selected. A professional staff member will be selected from each sample school. The PEAC and the building principal will select the staff member(s) who will serve on the SRG. If the planning and evaluation area involves only a small number of schools, a representative may be selected from each school.
2. In many instances the project or area identified by the PEAC will have particular relevance for several different divisions and departments. In these instances the administrator responsible for the area in question may select a staff member to serve on the SRG.

The project implemented the Community Participation Model during the 1974-75 school year. The focus of the participants' efforts was an assessment of the information needed by parents and students to enable them to take full advantage of the programs, services, and courses offered by the Columbus Public Schools. Special attention was given to the expanding programs at the secondary level. A summary of the effectiveness of the Model and the results of the needs assessment is presented below.

The Community-School Participation Forum was successfully implemented. Parents, students and interested community participants met in an eight meeting sequence designed to identify informational needs and determine ways of improving the information sharing processes of the school district. Twenty-one recommendations relating to the identified needs were developed.

The Community Resource Group was composed of eight communication specialists from the community. Their inclusion was a significant strength of the Model. The School Resource Group was composed of principals, counselors, instructional coordinators and teachers. Their inclusion also proved to be of significant value.

Because the planning and evaluation area (i.e., needs assessment) had been specified in the project proposal, the functions of the Planning and Evaluation Advisory Committee were performed by members of the project staff.

There were two problem areas identified through the evaluation of the Model. First, it was found that a larger number of potential participants should have been identified. This would have increased the level of participation from all schools included in the study. Second, it was found that sustaining the Model required considerable time and energy of all involved. If the Model is to be used in conducting activities similar to that undertaken by the project, a time period greater than the six month project time frame should be allocated.

The names of the Community-School Participation Forum members are presented in the Appendix of this report.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION SYSTEM

Changes in the educational marketplace are both a result and a cause of the complexity of today's world. To meet present and anticipated student needs, school districts have broadened curriculum, launched innovative projects and developed specialized programs and services.

The Columbus School District is no exception to this picture. At the elementary level, alternative schools have been developed with more to come. A diversified curriculum has been implemented at the secondary level. Students may select from a wide range of courses at the schools they are attending, and they have the opportunity to attend other Columbus schools and vocational facilities. To meet special needs, programs and services have expanded across grade levels.

Because of these many new alternatives and opportunities, it is more critical than ever that students and parents have accurate educational information on a timely basis. With a thorough understanding of the programs and services available, students and parents have a better chance of making appropriate choices.

Guided by the Community-School Participation Forum made up of students, parents, communication specialists from the community, and school personnel, the project developed an Educational Program Information System (EPIS).

The two components of the system are a Directory of Programs and Services and a method for providing comprehensive course selection information.

The Directory brings together in one document current information regarding the district's programs and services. Major features of the Directory are a user's guide, title and subject indexes, and a reference to where more information can be found. The four types of information provided by each Directory entry are: (1) purpose of the program or service; (2) location (usually a school(s); (3) contact person; and (4) available written information about the program or service. The Directory is supported by a Vertical File containing copies of the written materials listed in the Directory.

The Directory was designed for the use of central office administrators, principals, pupil services personnel, parents, students and the general public. The Directory would be distributed to all school buildings and public libraries. Comprehensive Vertical Files would be maintained at the district's central office. Schools would be supported in their efforts to develop Vertical Files that meet their informational needs.

The information in the Directory is prepared by the school personnel responsible for the various programs and services. The information is put into a standard format, printed and distributed from a central source.

The second component of EPIS is a method for providing parents, students and school personnel with comprehensive course selection information. This method provides the following information regarding all courses at the secondary level: (1) course title; (2) location; (3) grade level; (4) course credit; and (5) detailed course description information.

The information is provided through the use of a computer generated index that references all the course description information prepared by the district. Both the computer index and the course selection information are compiled into a binder for easy use. These binders are prepared centrally and distributed to all schools in the system.

While the information contained in EPIS pertains to the Columbus School District, the system would be of value as a model to districts providing similar opportunities and alternatives to students.

The method for implementing and updating EPIS is neither difficult nor expensive. Access to a medium size computer that supports COBOL is required to generate the computer index. The initial purchase of binders for the information is the major expense. The two components of the system can be implemented independently.

The system was demonstrated to a large number of school personnel and members of the Community-School Participation Forum. Their response was extremely favorable with over 96% indicating that the entire system should be implemented next year. The field test version of the system is already in use in the district.

Persons wishing more information about EPIS can write to the address given in the Introduction of this report.

CONCLUSION

The Columbus Title V, C project engaged in many activities that are directly related to the complexities of the school-community relationship. Notable among these activities were: (1) development and implementation of a model for involving school personnel and community members in an important planning and evaluation activity; (2) development of an in-service module for training persons who will be working with school and community groups; and (3) development of a system that will provide parents, students, community members and school personnel with information about the school district's programs.

The project staff hopes that the products produced will be of significant value to all involved in the educational partnership.

REFERENCES

Report Footnotes

1. "Generic Planning Model," in *Needs Assessment and Education: A Planning Handbook for Districts.* New Jersey Department of Education, Trenton, New Jersey, 1973.

2. *Planning for Change.* Florida Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida.

3. *Sharing Decisions-Dallas Style.* Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, Texas.

4. "Fresno Planning Model," Fresno County Department of Education, Fresno, California.

5. "Worldwide Planning Model," Worldwide Education and Research Institute, Salt Lake City, Utah.

6. *Phi Delta Kappa Kit.* Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa, Inc.

7. Roger A. Kaufman and J. Richard Harsh, "Determining Educational Needs: An Overview," California State Department of Education, Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, PLEDGE Conference, October, 1969.

8. *Ibid.* p. 10.

9. Roger A. Kaufman, *Educational System Planning.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972.

10. *Needs Assessment Guidelines.* Ohio Department of Education, Division of Planning and Evaluation, Columbus, Ohio, 1975.

11. Kaufman and Harsh, *loc. cit.*, p. 4.

12. Kaufman, *loc. cit.*, p. 9-10.

APPENDIX

COMMUNITY-SCHOOL PARTICIPATION FORUM

Community Participation Group
Parents and Community Participants

Mr. Wallace Anderson
Mrs. Donald Brooks
Mrs. William Brown
Mrs. Theresa Buck
Mr. Rick Cermals
Mrs. Stanton Clark
Mrs. Rose Clay
Mrs. Emma Cupe
Mrs. Marcella Cummings
Mrs. Phyllis Dawson
Mrs. G. Elliott
Mrs. Donald Fisher
Mrs. Virginia Gibbs
Mrs. Evelyn Huhn
Mrs. Geneva Hutcherson
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Kandel
Mrs. Sandra Mahan
Mrs. Garland McCallister
Mr. Gene Merryman
Mr. John Marshall
Mrs. Mary Neal
Mrs. Mary Nevius
Mrs. Velma Obert
Mrs. Reik Oldenquest
Mr. Wilbert Pack
Mrs. Georgia Pardee
Mrs. Janet Peery
Mrs. Charles Porter
Mrs. Dorothy Richardson
Mrs. George Rigrish
Mrs. Harold Roberts
Mrs. Charles Sciance
Mrs. Gail Shambaugh
Mrs. Juanita Smith
Mrs. Patricia Stevenson
Mrs. Max Swigert
Mrs. Robert Trout
Mrs. Betty Ventling
Mrs. Wilma Watts
Mrs. Lester Wright

Community Participation Group
High School Students

Brookhaven
Robert Keehl
Valerie Ventresca

Central
Verna Martin
Brenda Potter

East
Jill Barnes
Ernest Dandridge

Eastmoor
Lisa Jones
Richard Ruffin

Mohawk
Raymond Neal
Cynthia Rippey

North
Kevin Courtright
Rita Rodgers

Northland
David Spangler
Alan Veatch

South
Tammy Brown
Charles Duvall

Linden-McKinley
Debra Haynes
Jessie Tukes

Marion-Franklin
Allen Battle
Roberta Fraley

Mifflin
Barbara Rose
Sandra Walker

Walnut Ridge
Roberta Casserman
Catherine Reiter

West
Alice Buchanan
Jerry Haines

Whetstone
Lisa Danley
Elaine Sullivan

COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY GROUP

Ronald Castell, Division of Marketing and Promotion, WBNS-TV

Sharon DeBord, Vice President Administrative Operations, WCOL Radio

Herb Flint, Vice President, Burkholder-Flint, Inc.

Tom Forsythe, Editor, Linden Northeast News

Craig Gifford, Director of Special Services, Ohio School Boards Association

James McDonald, Associate Professor of Journalism, Ohio State University

Donald J. Roberts, Special Assistant to the Vice President, The Ohio State University

Ann Walker, Community Services Director, WLW-C TV

SCHOOL RESOURCE GROUP

Rita Balcom
Principal
Indian Springs Elementary

Richard Briggs
Project Coordinator
North High

Dwight Brown
Counselor
Marion-Franklin High

Burrell Denune
Curriculum Coordinator
Mifflin High

Janet Deverse
Teacher
Indianola Elementary

Jerry Fry
Counselor
Brookhaven High

George Georgas
Curriculum Coordinator
Central High

John Harmon
Counselor
South High

Carolyn Hill
Teacher
Indian Springs Elementary

Fred Meister
Counselor
Eastmoor High

Duane Pelkey
Assistant Principal
Northland High

Jane Reamer
Assistant Principal
Walnut Ridge High

Titus Saunders
Assistant Principal
Linden-McKinley High

Ralph Smith
Counselor
Dominion Junior High

Andrea Tate
Teacher
Indianola Junior High

Linda Thompson
Activities Coordinator
Whetstone High

H. W. Wannemacher
Curriculum Coordinator
East High

Richard Weber
Curriculum Coordinator
West High

Lucretia Williams
Counselor
Mohawk Junior-Senior High